

CORNELL PRESENTS THE FUTURE TO THE NYS FRUIT INDUSTRY

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by Linda McCandless

GENEVA, NY: Over 425 people attended the Cornell Fruit Field Day 2000 held at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, on August 17, and they all came for different reasons.

Peter TenEyck, owner of the 100-acre Indian Ladder Farms, in New Scotland, NY, wanted to learn more about diversifying his apple operation, as he attempts the conversion from a wholesale to a 100 percent retail operation. Karen Bischooping, who has been running a family farm market operation nears Rochester for 12 years, started in kraut cabbage and has since moved into apples, stone fruits and berries. "There's a lot of great stuff here," she said, following Courtney Weber, who was demonstrating a brush hoe weeder in a strawberry bed. John Lombardy of Benjamin's Orchard in Connecticut went home planning to change the tree spacing in his next planting based on Terence Robinson's presentation on super high density apple tree spacing. Stephen Searl, a recent Cornell grad and horticultural manager at the 250-acre Wickham's Fruit Farm on the Long Island's North Fork, came looking for new ideas to reduce pesticide use. He paid close attention to Andrew Landers' demonstrations of spray equipment that reduce drift.

"We were very, very pleased at the number of fruit growers who came," said Terence Robinson, professor of horticultural sciences and one of the field day organizers. By far the greatest percentage were apple and grape growers, but representatives from nurseries, NYSAg & Markets, Cornell



Terence Robinson, Cornell University professor of horticultural sciences, tells apple growers about crop load on young trees at the Cornell Fruit Field Day 2000, on August 17, which over 425 people attended. CREDIT: K. Stevens/NYSAES/Cornell

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Cooperative Extension and equipment dealers participated in the bus tours that went out at staggered intervals, cycling through the Station farms.

"The Cornell Statewide Program Committee embarked on this event a year ago to try and highlight research done at Cornell for the commercial fruit industry," said Robinson. "We recognize the fruit industry is in some financial difficulty and that the research at Cornell could be of benefit to them."

The ambitious and complex program showcased 62 presentations by 31 researchers, demonstrations by a dozen equipment manufacturers, seven nurseries, and displays provided by some 25 other commercial agricultural sponsors. Cornell presenters hailed from Geneva, Ithaca, the Hudson Valley Lab, The Lake Ontario Fruit Team, the Plant Genetics Resources Unit at Geneva, and extension offices throughout the state. This was the first year the Fruit Day included presentations on grapes and equipment demonstrations.

Presentations were made on fruit breeding, production systems, integrated pest management, genetic engineering, crop physiology, water and nutrient management, varieties, trellis systems, fire blight control, insecticide trials, and enology. The Station's plantings of tree fruits, stone fruits, grapes and small fruits, including apples, peaches, plums, pears, cherries, wine and juice grapes, strawberries and raspberries were highlighted, with presentations made at each of the various stops. Susan Henry, the new dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who was introduced during lunch by director Jim Hunter, said the research that the faculty and staff communicated was "very impressive. "The people at Geneva represent what the entire college can provide in terms of dedication and commitment to agriculture in New York State," she said.

Nathan Rudgers, commissioner of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, was very encouraged to see this kind of interaction between a "world class research institution and industry." "I cannot think of a better example of direct engagement than this fruit field day," he said. Rudgers was optimistic about the future of the fruit industry in New York.

"Apple growers are having a tough time," said TenEyck. "We have too much product for sale being sold by too many to too



Andrew Landers, professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, discusses orchard sprayer efficacy, pesticide deposition, and drift reduction at Cornell Fruit Field Day 2000. This was the first year sprayers and other equipment were demonstrated. CREDIT: K. Stevens/NYSAES /Cornell

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Steve Clark (left) an apple grower from Milton, NY, talks to Cornell Dean Susan Henry (center) and Hugh Price (right) about the challenges growers face in the Hudson Valley. CREDIT: J.Ogrodnick/NYSAES/Cornell

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Nathan Rudgers, Commissioner of the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, is optimistic about the future of the New York State fruit industry, telling growers at the Cornell Fruit Field Day 2000 that the "state government will help you move forward" in a "challenging world economy." CREDIT: J.Ogrodnick/NYSAES /Cornell

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few. This field day was absolutely terrific in terms of its variety and the quality of the presentations offered, and in the execution."

"I was particularly pleased to see well everyone worked together to make this event go as smoothly as it did, with very few glitches," said entomologist Art Agnello, another one of the prime organizers, following the event.

"We were very very pleased at the level of cooperation among researchers at Ithaca and Geneva and the Hudson Valley," said Robinson.

The event was sponsored by equipment dealers from throughout the Northeast, including Empire Tractor, Inc., Hilltop Nurseries, Lakeland Equipment, Applied Agricultural Technologies, and 33 others.

[More photos are available. Here.](#)

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Courtney Weber, small fruit breeder in Cornell University's department of horticultural sciences, tells growers on the Small Fruits Tour compares relative yields of different strawberry and raspberry varieties. CREDIT: L.McCandless/NYSAES/Cornell

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